

Claims

What is claimed:

1. A method for providing investment management services, comprising the steps of:
 - a. allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
 - b. providing a plurality of portfolios for investment through the financial institution, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
 - c. accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
 - d. processing and maintaining certificates, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;
 - e. monitoring performance of the portfolios; and
 - f. allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of assessing investment risk characteristics of the investor.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein assessing the investment risk characteristics involves a financial questionnaire directed to identifying investment objectives.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the financial questionnaire includes a six-step question prompt.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the portfolios consist of no-load mutual funds.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein monitoring performance of the portfolios includes evaluating portfolio compliance with pre-determined risk objectives.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein monitoring performance of the portfolios occurs at least daily.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein monitoring performance of the portfolios employs Techfi portfolio management software.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein processing and maintaining certificates employs a centralized custodian.
- 5 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the centralized custodian is Datalynx®.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein the investment management services are transparent to the investor, the investor accessing the account by computer, over the Internet, through the financial institution, the web pages branded with identifying material of the financial institution.
- 10 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the investment management services are transparent to the investor, the investor accessing the account by automatic teller machine, through the financial institution, the displays of the automatic teller machine branded with identifying material of the financial institution.
13. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor.
- 15 14. The method of claim 13, wherein updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor is performed by the centralized custodian.
15. The method of claim 14, wherein the account status is mailed to the investor, the account status branded with identifying material of the financial institution.
- 20 16. The method of claim 1, wherein the financial institution is a bank.
17. The method of claim 1, wherein the financial institution is an investment agent, broker, advisor, or entity.
18. The method of claim 1, wherein the financial institution is an insurance agent, broker, or entity.
- 25 19. The method of claim 1, wherein fees for the investment management services are based on total assets managed rather than on commission.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the total assets managed are total assets of an investor account, the fees being paid by the investor.
20. The method of claim 19, wherein a portion of the fee paid by the investor is provided to the financial institution as incentive for providing the investment management services.
- 5 21. A method for performing portfolio management services, comprising the steps of:
 - a. allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
 - 10 b. providing a plurality of portfolios for investor investment through the financial institution, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
 - c. accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
 - 15 d. processing and maintaining certificates through a centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;
 - e. monitoring performance of the portfolios through a portfolio manager;
 - 20 f. allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and
 - g. updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the centralized custodian.
- 25 22. The method of claim 21, wherein the centralized custodian is Datalynx®.
23. The method of claim 21, wherein the portfolio manager is Techfi portfolio management software.
24. A method for performing portfolio management services, comprising the steps of:
 - 30 a. allowing an investor to open an account;

- b. providing a plurality of portfolios for investor investment, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
- 5 c. accepting funds from the investor for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
- 10 d. processing and maintaining certificates through a centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;
- e. monitoring performance of the portfolios through a portfolio manager;
- f. allowing the investor to access the account to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and
- 15 g. updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the centralized custodian.
- 25. The method of claim 24, wherein the centralized custodian is Datalynx®.
- 26. The method of claim 24, wherein the portfolio manager is Techfi portfolio management software.
- 20 27. The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of assessing investment risk characteristics of the investor.
- 28. The method of claim 24, wherein fees for the investment management services are based on a total amount of assets managed rather than on commission.
- 25 29. The method of claim 28, wherein the total assets managed are total assets of an investor account, the fees being paid by the investor.
- 30. The method of claim 29, wherein a portion of the fee paid by the investor is provided to the financial institution as incentive for providing the investment management services.
- 31. A method for managing investment portfolios, comprising the steps of:
 - 30 a. assessing investment risk characteristics of an investor using a six-step financial questionnaire directed to identifying investment objectives;

- b. allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
 - c. providing a selection of six portfolios for investment through the financial institution, each portfolio consisting of a pre-determined distribution of no-load mutual funds directed to a specific characteristic of risk;
 - d. accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the six portfolios through purchase of securities;
 - e. processing and maintaining certificates through a Datalynx® centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor;
 - f. monitoring performance of the portfolios through Techfi portfolio management software;
 - g. allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the six portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and
 - h. updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the Datalynx® centralized custodian, wherein fees charged for managing the investment portfolios is based on an aggregate of assets of the financial institution under management, wherein the managing the investment portfolios is transparent to the investor, all activities occurring through the financial institution are branded with identifying material of the financial institution.
32. A computer-readable medium that configures a computer system to perform a method for providing investment management services, the method comprising the steps of:
 - a. allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
 - b. providing a plurality of portfolios for investment through the financial institution, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
 - c. accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
 - d. processing and maintaining certificates, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;
 - e. monitoring performance of the portfolios; and

- f. allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities.

33. A computer-readable medium that configures a computer system to perform a method for performing portfolio management services, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
- b. providing a plurality of portfolios for investor investment through the financial institution, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
- c. accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
- d. processing and maintaining certificates through a centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;
- e. monitoring performance of the portfolios through a portfolio manager;
- f. allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and
- g. updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the centralized custodian.

34. A computer-readable medium that configures a computer system to perform a method for performing portfolio management services, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. allowing an investor to open an account;
- b. providing a plurality of portfolios for investor investment, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
- c. accepting funds from the investor for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
- d. processing and maintaining certificates through a centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with

the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;

- e. monitoring performance of the portfolios through a portfolio manager;
- f. allowing the investor to access the account to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and
- g. updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the centralized custodian.

35. A computer-readable medium that configures a computer system to perform a method for managing investment portfolios, the method comprising the steps of:

- a. assessing investment risk characteristics of an investor using a six-step financial questionnaire directed to identifying investment objectives;
- b. allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
- c. providing a selection of six portfolios for investment through the financial institution, each portfolio consisting of a pre-determined distribution of no-load mutual funds directed to a specific characteristic of risk;
- d. accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the six portfolios through purchase of securities;
- e. processing and maintaining certificates through a Datalynx® centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor;
- f. monitoring performance of the portfolios through Techfi portfolio management software;
- g. allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the six portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and
- h. updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the Datalynx® centralized custodian, wherein fees charged for managing the investment portfolios is based on an aggregate of assets of the financial institution under management, wherein the managing the investment portfolios is transparent to the investor, all activities occurring through the financial institution are branded with identifying material of the financial institution.

36. A computer-readable medium that stores a program for providing investment management services, the program comprising:

- a. means for allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
- b. means for providing a plurality of portfolios for investment through the financial institution, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
- c. means for accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
- d. means for processing and maintaining certificates, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;
- e. means for monitoring performance of the portfolios; and
- f. means for allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities.

37. A computer-readable medium that stores a program for performing portfolio management services, the program comprising:

- a. means for allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
- b. means for providing a plurality of portfolios for investor investment through the financial institution, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
- c. means for accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
- d. means for processing and maintaining certificates through a centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;
- e. means for monitoring performance of the portfolios through a portfolio manager;
- f. means for allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and

- g. means for updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the centralized custodian.
38. A computer-readable medium that stores a program for performing portfolio management services, the program comprising:
- 5 a. means for allowing an investor to open an account;
- b. means for providing a plurality of portfolios for investor investment, each portfolio having a different investment distribution representing a specific characteristic of risk;
- 10 c. means for accepting funds from the investor for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase of securities;
- d. means for processing and maintaining certificates through a centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor for investment into one or more of the portfolios;
- 15 e. means for monitoring performance of the portfolios through a portfolio manager;
- f. means for allowing the investor to access the account to modify the funds invested into one or more of the portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and
- 20 g. means for updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the centralized custodian.
39. A computer-readable medium that stores a program for managing investment portfolios, the program comprising:
- 25 a. means for assessing investment risk characteristics of an investor using a six-step financial questionnaire directed to identifying investment objectives;
- b. means for allowing an investor to open an account through a financial institution;
- 30 c. means for providing a selection of six portfolios for investment through the financial institution, each portfolio consisting of a pre-determined distribution of no-load mutual funds directed to a specific characteristic of risk;
- 35 d. means for accepting funds from the investor through the financial institution for placement into the account, the funds invested into one or more of the six portfolios through purchase of securities;

- e. means for processing and maintaining certificates through a Datalynx® centralized custodian, the certificates memorializing the securities purchased with the funds accepted from the investor;
- f. means for monitoring performance of the portfolios through Techfi portfolio management software;
- g. means for allowing the investor to access the account through the financial institution to modify the funds invested into one or more of the six portfolios through purchase or sale of securities; and
- h. means for updating the account data and reporting the account status to the investor through the Datalynx® centralized custodian, wherein fees charged for managing the investment portfolios is based on an aggregate of assets of the financial institution under management, wherein the managing the investment portfolios is transparent to the investor, all activities occurring through the financial institution are branded with identifying material of the financial institution.